

Attorney Docket No.: FMCE-P138

Claims 1, 3, 7-10 and 12-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over WO 02/22491 to Le Devehat (Le Devehat 1) in view of WO 01/04041 to Le Devehat (Le Devehat 2).

In his Amendment After Final dated June 14, 2010, applicant argued that this rejection is improper in regards to independent claims 1 and 14 because neither Le Devehat 1 nor Le Devehat 2 discloses a winch which frictionally engages the cable to move the connection system between the first and second locations. In particular, applicant argued that the cable 41 in Le Devehat 1 is not frictionally engaged by the winch 42 but is merely wound upon the winch. Also, applicant argued that the cable 17 in Le Devehat 2 is not frictionally engaged by either the first winch 40 at the first location or the second winch 48 at the second location but is merely wound upon these winches.

In response to applicant's arguments, the Examiner contends in the Advisory Action that "[t]he fact that the cable is wound on the winch inherently discloses that the cable is frictionally engaged with the winch" (paragraph 11, line 4).

Applicant respectfully submits that this conclusion is incorrect. In both Le Devehat 1 and Le Devehat 2, one end of the cable is connected to the winch. Therefore, when the winch is activated the cable is wound upon the winch (much like a fishing reel). In contrast, neither end of applicant's cable is connected to the winch. Instead, the ends of the cable are secured between the first and second locations. Therefore, when the winch is activated the cable is not wound

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upon the winch. Rather, the winch frictionally engages the cable to cause the winch to move relative to the cable.

Moreover, neither Le Devehat 1 nor Le Devehat 2 relies on a frictional engagement between the winch and the cable to transfer the rotational force generated by the winch into a pulling force on the cable. In Le Devehat 1, one end of the cable 41 is connected to the winch 42 and the other end of the cable is connected to the second location. Consequently, the rotational force generated by the winch 42 creates a direct pulling force on the cable 41 which pulls the connection system 28 to the second location (see Fig. 1). In Le Devehat 2, one end of the cable 17/49 is connected to the first winch 40 at the first location and the other end of the cable is connected to the second winch 48 at the second location. Consequently, as with Le Devehat 1, the rotational force generated by the second winch 48 creates a direct pulling force on the cable 17/49 which pulls the connection system 46 to the second location (see Fig. 2). Thus, neither Le Devehat 1 nor Le Devehat 2 relies on frictional engagement between the winch and the pulley to move the connection system to the second location.

In contrast, the rotational force generated by applicant's winch would not be transferred to the cable at all absent the frictional engagement between the winch and the cable. This is due to the fact that neither end of applicant's cable is connected to the winch. In applicant's claimed invention, the frictional force between the winch and the cable transfers the rotational force generated by the

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winch into a pulling force on the cable. This frictional engagement between the winch and the cable is not present in either Le Devehat 1 or Le Devehat 2.

Therefore, claims 1 and 14 are clearly patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over any permissible combination of Le Devehat 1 and Le Devehat 2.

With respect to independent claim 15, applicant argued in his Amendment After Final of June 14, 2010 that neither Le Devehat 1 nor Le Devehat 2 discloses a cable having a first end which is connected to the first location and a second end which is connected to a winch, wherein the cable is wound around a pulley which is positioned at the second location.

In response to this argument, the Examiner appears to contend in the Advisory Action that the winch 40 is the pulley called for in claim 15.

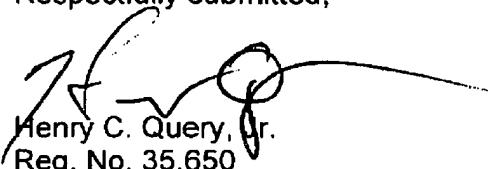
Applicant respectfully submits that this conclusion is wrong. Claim 15 requires that a first end of the cable be connected to the first location and the second end of the cable be connected to the winch. Thus, claim 15 necessarily requires that a portion of the cable between the first and second ends must be wound around the pulley. In Le Devehat 2, the first end of the cable 17/49 is wound around a first winch 40 at the first location and the second end of the cable is wound around a second winch 48 at the second location. Le Devehat 2 does not disclose that a portion of the cable between the first and second ends is wound around a pulley, separate from the second winch 48, at the second location.

Therefore, claim 15 is clearly patentable over any permissible combination of Le Devehat 1 and Le Devehat 2.

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For the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 3, 4 and 7-19 are submitted as allowable. Favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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